



NEWS RELEASE

The 26th Judicial District of North Carolina

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 1, 2020

26TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COVID-19 MODIFIED COURT OPERATIONS BEGINNING JULY 6, 2020

In the continued interest of the health and safety of the community and court personnel, we remain committed to balancing access to justice with the ongoing public health crisis that COVID-19 presents.

In accordance with all COVID-19 related emergency directives from North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, **the 26th Judicial District has modified its court operations for the month of July 2020.**

Court offices in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse remain open for business. However, by order of the Chief Justice, only people with business at the courthouse will be allowed to enter. Everyone is encouraged to use email and telephone to communicate with staff of the 26th Judicial District to minimize the number of persons entering the courthouse. Contact information for court offices may be found on the [Judicial Directory](#).

CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT:

Operational Hours, Mail & Filing

- Open to the public at the Mecklenburg County Courthouse, 832 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202, on Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9:00AM and 12:00PM.
- To further minimize foot traffic in the courthouse, attorneys and litigants are encouraged to submit filings by mail to the greatest extent possible. Filings are to be mailed to:
**Clerk of Superior Court
Mecklenburg County Courthouse
P.O. Box 37971
Charlotte, NC 28237-7971**
- Receptacles will be available in designated areas to accept filings. All persons seeking to file legal documents are encouraged to submit their filings using the secure receptacles. If you are a legal professional or filing on behalf of another, you are required to deposit your documents in the receptacle.
- A secure receptacle will be located at the reception-desk inside the McDowell and Fourth Street entrance on the first floor. Filing will be available at this receptacle from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. Items placed in the receptacle by 4:00PM will be file-stamped, processed, and a copy mailed back. To ensure same-day mailing, please include a self-addressed, pre-paid envelope.
- A secure receptacle will also be located on the third floor for a limited time. Filing will be available at this receptacle from 9:00AM to 12:00PM. Items placed in the receptacle by 12:00PM will be file-stamped, processed, and a copy mailed back. To ensure same-day mailing, please include a self-addressed, pre-paid envelope.

- For filings by mail and deposited in the receptacles, please include a certified check or money order. No cash payments accepted.

Access to Public Records

- Access to public records is available from 9:00AM to 12:00PM, Monday through Friday, by appointment only.
- To access Criminal files by appointment, email Mecklenburg.Criminal@nccourts.org
- To access Civil files by appointment, email Mecklenburg.Civil@nccourts.org
- To access Estate files by appointment, email Mecklenburg.Estates@nccourts.org

Special Proceedings

- Foreclosure hearings will resume in the month of July 2020.
- Filers are encouraged to submit documents in the secure receptacle (*i.e.*, motor vehicle liens, name changes, guardian ad litem appointments).

Estates

- In order to limit face-to-face interactions between the public and staff, customer assistance will be provided using technology to the greatest extent possible. Telephone conferencing, email transmissions, and WebEx tutorials are methods being employed to deliver customer service.
- Clerk staff will monitor and respond to telephone calls and emails. The Estates phone line is 704-686-0460. Estates questions may be emailed to: Mecklenburg.Estates@nccourts.org
- Filers are encouraged to submit documents in the secure receptacle (*i.e.*, application for administration by clerk, family history affidavit, application and assignment of the year's allowance).

Incompetency & Guardianship Matters

- Incompetency and Guardianship matters will be scheduled in designated courtrooms. Dockets will be posted in the Clerk of Court – Administration Suite 3600.
- A Judicial Hearing Officer will be on-site during operational hours to address emergency matters.
- Non-emergency filings will be accepted by United States Postal Service or may be submitted in the secure receptacle. To schedule a hearing, please email: Mecklenburg.CSC.FrontDesk@nccourts.org

MAGISTRATE AND SMALL CLAIMS

- The Criminal Magistrate's Office located at 801 East Fourth Street will be open 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and normal operations will continue for Warrants for Arrest, Magistrate's Orders, Criminal Summons, Initial Appearances, Cash Bonds / Property Bonds, Involuntary Commitment Orders, Juvenile Petitions, and Secured and Non-Secured Custody Orders.
- **Courtroom 5150** will operate for the purpose of Civil Commitment hearings. Civil Commitment hearings will be conducted remotely. All participants in a remote hearing shall be able to be seen and heard by all other participants. Respondents must have the ability to communicate confidentially with Special Counsel during the proceeding.
- **Weddings** will be conducted by Magistrates in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse **in courtroom 2330 Monday through Friday from 2:00PM until 4:00PM by appointment only**. To schedule an appointment for a wedding, please email: Mecklenburg.Magistrate.Weddings@nccourts.org. Only the parties to the marriage and two witnesses may attend a scheduled marriage ceremony.
- Summary ejectment matters in Small Claims Court will resume the week of July 20, 2020.

DISTRICT AND SUPERIOR COURT:

Criminal District Court—Courtrooms 1150 and 1130

- Virtual pleas will be scheduled in the month of July 2020.
- Felony First Appearance hearings will be conducted by video during the morning session of court.
- Domestic Violence First Appearance hearings will be conducted by video during the morning session of court.

- Felony Probable Cause Hearings will be scheduled consistent with state law within 15 days in the morning sessions.
- Defendants who appear for Probable Cause Hearings will be seated in Courtroom 1130 at six-foot intervals. Defense attorneys will use the administrative courtrooms in 1130 to conduct confidential discussions with clients. Defendants who need to see a judge will be seated in courtroom 1150 at the end of the morning session.

Domestic Violence (Civil) Court—Courtrooms 4110 and 4130

- Requests for Ex Parte relief filed with the Clerk of Superior Court between 9:00AM and 10:30AM will be immediately scheduled for hearing before a district court judge in Courtroom 4110 during the morning session. Requests for Ex Parte relief filed with the Clerk of Superior Court after 10:30AM will be scheduled for the afternoon session in Courtroom 4110 or 4130 on the date of filing.
- Return hearings will be scheduled according to statute in Courtroom 4110 and 4130 during morning and afternoon sessions. Return hearings that require substantial evidence and will last an hour or longer may be rescheduled to an afternoon session in Courtroom 4130. If the calendar within 10 days of filing has too many cases docketed to allow for social distancing, then the Court may determine that good cause exists to set the case for hearing in 11 to 15 days out. Calendaring decisions are intended to comply with the directives of the Chief Justice to minimize the number of persons in the courtroom.
- Hearings will be held in **Courtrooms 4110 and 4130**. Litigants will be seated at six-foot intervals in the courtrooms.
- The capacity of each courtroom is posted outside the vestibule. If the number of persons appearing for DVPO hearings exceeds the courtroom capacity, litigants, witnesses and persons present for emotional support may be asked to wait outside the courtroom or in another designated location until the case is called for hearing.

General Civil Court*

*(*excludes Family Court, Child Support and Domestic Violence cases)*

- There will be no jury trials during the months of June or July 2020 in District or Superior Court. All jury trials previously scheduled during these months have been or will be continued by the Trial Court Administrator (TCA), considering peremptorily set cases, number of prior continuances, and age of cases.
- Superior Court Civil bench trials will resume in the month of July 2020 in **courtroom 6130**. All bench trials which were continued on or after April 13, 2020 will be continued by the TCA considering peremptorily set cases, number of prior continuances, and age of cases.
- Superior Court Civil Motions will be heard in **courtroom 6310** Monday through Friday, in-person during the AM sessions and remotely during the PM sessions.

Domestic Court—Courtrooms 8100, 8130, 8150, 8170, 8300 and 8310

- In-person trials and hearings will resume in the morning sessions only in all domestic courtrooms. Judges may direct and parties may request remote WebEx hearings for certain cases.
- Child Support Court (**courtroom 8110**) will resume operations in August 2020. In-person and remote hearings will be scheduled.

Juvenile Court—Courtrooms 8330, 8350, 8370, and 8390

- All cases will be scheduled for a time certain after consideration of the issues to be tried, the nature of evidence and number of witnesses necessary to the material issues.
- Two judges will handle abuse, neglect, dependency and delinquency hearings. AM hearings will be time certain; PM hearings will be remote hearings.
- One judge will handle special proceedings (*e.g.*, contested adjudications and probable cause hearings that need testimony).
- Detention hearings will be held on Monday and Thursday (remotely).
- Non-secure custody hearings will be held each week and will be heard by the assigned judge except when assigned to cover detention hearings.
- Delinquency cases will be scheduled on Mondays and Thursdays. In-person hearings will be calendared on a case-by-case basis during morning sessions.

- The Assistant District Attorney supervising the Juvenile Prosecution Unit will work with the Council for Children’s Rights and defense bar to prioritize cases for hearings in the months of July and August 2020. Priority cases will include probable cause hearings, return indictment hearings, post-supervision release planning review hearings, and adjudication and/or disposition for juveniles in detention.

Felony Administrative Court

- Administrative Court (**5310**) will run Monday through Friday in both the AM and PM sessions. Cases will be set according to the current schedule of Mecklenburg County Superior Criminal Court and will continue to be grouped under the current Quad system. Cases will be scheduled in four (4) quads: 9:30AM, 11:00AM, 2:00PM, and 3:30PM. Parties must appear promptly at their scheduled time and will be allowed in the courtroom only during their scheduled Quad. **Bond hearings will continue to be scheduled only during the administrative week of the teams handling the case.**
- Matters such as scheduling conferences and follow-up scheduling conferences will take place electronically via email between the parties and the Trial Court Administrator. Pre-Trial Readiness Conferences will not be calendared in Administrative Court, though out-of-court evidence viewings will be arranged by the assigned prosecutor upon timely request of the defense. Cases currently scheduled for Pre-Trial Readiness Conference will be moved to trial calendars.

Felony Probation Violation Court

- Probation Court will resume its normal schedule in **courtroom 5350**. Full terms of Probation Court will be set in 5350 the weeks of July 13, 2020 and July 27, 2020.
- After the week of June 29th, **courtroom 5150** will not continue to be used for administrative court until and unless the backlog of administrative matters necessitates it.

JURY DUTY:

- All jurors summoned for Monday, July 6, 2020, should check their reporting status at eresponse.mecknc.gov or call the automated juror information line at 877-649-7133 after 5:30PM on the evening before their scheduled report date to determine if their appearance is still required. The grand jury will be selected on July 6. If chosen to serve on the grand jury, jurors will be required to appear every other Monday for six months.
- Jurors previously rescheduled to dates in July (other than July 6) have been excused and should not report.

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